

**HENDERSON EXECUTIVE AIRPORT LEASE  
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENTS  
NV-053-99-038 and NV-053-99-039**

**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI)  
DECISION RECORD**

**Background Information**

Clark County Department of Aviation (CCDOA) has requested a public airport lease from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) for 140 acres of federal land adjacent to the existing Henderson Executive Air Terminal (HEA). CCDOA plans to expand the existing facility to develop an enhanced general aviation and Grand Canyon air tour reliever airport to McCarran International Airport (McCarran). McCarran serves the growing air carrier demand in the Las Vegas region and also provides service for air taxi/commuter, general aviation, and military aircraft. Due to land and environmental constraints, no additional runway facilities are planned for McCarran.

In September, 1994, the Las Vegas McCarran International Airport Capacity Enhancement Plan (Plan) was completed. The Plan found that significant annual delay savings could be achieved at McCarran if general aviation aircraft operations were to occur at enhanced reliever airports. The Plan recommended development of reliever airports within the Clark County Airport System, and, in February, 1996, Clark County purchased what was then the Sky Harbor Airport with the intent of developing the new facility.

Reliever airports serve general aviation activity and are a critical element of a regional airport system. General aviation includes all civil aircraft operations not classified as air carrier or air taxi operations (i.e., business jet, twin engine turboprop, twin engine piston prop, and single engine piston prop). By accommodating general aviation aircraft at HEA (1) delays and airfield congestion at McCarran Airport is reduced and, (2) general aviation aircraft are segregated from air carrier or taxi operations thus allowing safer, more efficient operations.

The proposed action is identified as Alternative 1 and consists of facility and runway improvements. The facility improvements affect the existing airport footprint while the following runway improvements affect the lease area:

- Decommissioning and removal of existing Runway 18-36 and the existing parallel taxiway
- Reconstruction of Runway 18-36 with a 14-degree counterclockwise realignment and new length and width (6,500 ft. x 100 ft.) which will be designated Runway 17R-35L
- Construction of a 5,000 ft. x 75 ft. parallel runway (Runway 17L-35R)
- Construction of a full-length parallel taxiway (50 ft. wide) west of proposed Runway 17R-35L
- Construction of connecting taxiways to provide access to parallel runway 17L-35R

Runway 17R-35L would be constructed to Airport Reference Code (ARC) B-III standards, as defined in Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Advisory Circular 150/5300-13, with a pavement strength needed to accommodate regular use by 30,000 lb. single-wheel aircraft (one wheel per main landing gear) and 45,000 lb. dual-wheel aircraft (two wheels per main landing gear). Runway 17L-35R would be constructed to ARC B-II standards with a pavement strength to accommodate regular use by 12,500 lb. single-wheel aircraft and 20,000 lb. dual-wheel aircraft. This development will serve to separate high-performance general aviation aircraft and commercial air tour operators from other general aviation users (flight training).

Operations on Runway 17L-35R (parallel runway) will be restricted to the hours of 7 a.m. and 10 p.m. unless Runway 17R-35L (primary runway) is closed for maintenance or otherwise unavailable during the overnight hours.

Proposed construction will occur over a two-year period and timing of the project will be driven by demand and funding availability.

### **Summary of Environmental Assessment**

The following documents are incorporated by reference into this FONSI/Decision Record:

*Henderson Executive Airport Master Plan Report (Master Plan)*

*Final Environmental Assessment Master Plan Report Recommendations Henderson Executive Airport (NV-053-99-038) (Airport EA)*

*Final Environmental Assessment Land Lease to the Clark County Department of Aviation for Development at Henderson Executive Airport (NV-053-99-039) (BLM EA)*

The Master Plan was prepared by CCDOA for the FAA and provides a comprehensive examination of the (1) current status of the existing airport, (2) anticipated future use, and (3) the proposed project. The environmental assessments provide a comprehensive analysis of the impacts to resources from the proposed project.

As required by the FAA, an environmental assessment (Airport EA) was completed by CCDOA in order to determine approval of the Airport Layout Plan (ALP), a plan which shows the layout of airport facilities and provides supporting data. All airport development must be in accordance with an approved ALP. FAA approval of the ALP is a prerequisite to (1) federal funding of airport improvement projects under the Airport and Airway Improvement Act of 1982, as amended, (Public Laws 97-248 and 100-223) and 14 C.F.R. Part 158 and (2) use of Passenger Facility Charge revenue to assist with project financing. Total expenditures for the project are estimated at \$21.55 million (1996 dollar values). Potentially, an estimated \$16.6 million could be funded through the FAA's Airport Improvement Program.

Seven alternatives, including the proposed action (Alternative 1) and the no-action alternatives, were considered in the Airport EA. On July 6, 1998, the FAA made a FONSI determination for the Airport EA and approved the ALP on March 16, 1999. The Master Plan and the Airport EA were submitted to BLM for review and were incorporated by reference in to the BLM EA which addressed Alternative 1 and the no-action alternative.

During the public hearing process, issues were raised relating to air quality, noise, safety, land use compatibility, flight patterns, socioeconomic impacts, growth-related impacts (i.e., increase in infrastructure and roads), and adequacy of the environmental documents. BLM has considered these issues in its analysis of the action. An October 12, 1999 letter from the City of Henderson advised BLM that a conditional use permit for the existing airport was issued but a master plan including any expansion had not yet been approved. The City also requested that the lease include a provision to allow for a 120 ft. major arterial (the extension of Paradise Road) and a flood water detention basin (Pittman East Detention Basin). The detention basin has been authorized under BLM right-of-way N-63287, and the arterial will require separate right-of-way authorization.

Since the release of the BLM EA, the South Enterprise/West Henderson Land Use and Transportation Plan, January 13, 2000 (Land Use and Transportation Plan) was completed which creates a land use and transportation plan for approximately eleven square miles south of the Lake Mead Drive between Las Vegas Boulevard and the Henderson city limits. The Land Use and Transportation Plan addresses the HEA Environs, future expansion of the airport, and designates land use categories within the HEA Center Plan [General Commercial (GC), Business Park (BC), and Public/Semipublic (PS)]. The Henderson City Council adopted the plan on March 7, 2000, and annexation of the area is underway.

The stated goal in the Land Use and Transportation Plan for airport development is to establish appropriate land uses adjacent to HEA and under the runway flight path. Policies have been adopted which will (1) maintain open space and park areas immediately south of the airport runway, (2) prohibit single-family residential dwellings within the 65 DNL noise contour, and (3) encourage Business Park uses adjacent to airport facilities.

The land surrounding the airport is currently zoned for business park/industrial, commercial general, rural estates, and residential.

### **Affected Resources:**

Environmental impacts from Alternative 1 as analyzed in the Airport EA and the BLM EA will not be significant. The following summarizes the affected resources and identifies mitigation measures which will be incorporated as stipulations into the public airport lease:

#### Aircraft Noise Exposure

FAA requires the determination of significant noise impacts to be based on noise exposure of Day-night average sound level (DNL) 65 and higher though some people exposed to aircraft noise levels lower than DNL 65 could experience annoyances related to aircraft overflights. Based on the noise exposure maps presented in the Airport EA and a review of subsequent land use changes in the Airport Environs, no noise-sensitive land uses would be exposed to aircraft noise of DNL 65 and higher. Therefore, noise impacts will not be considered significant as determined by Federal Aviation Regulations, Part 150, Airport Noise Compatibility Planning (FAR Part 150).

With implementation of the action, runways will be realigned to a more north-south orientation which shifts touch-and-go flight tracks away from the Seven Hills subdivision and other residential areas east of the Airport (Airport EA, pp. 83-101; BLM EA, pp. 21-22). Potential does exist for single-event noise annoyances which may result from touch-and-go overflights of Seven Hills. In order to mitigate such activity, CCDOA will adopt the touch-and-go flight tracks as depicted in the Airport EA, Figure 21, which directs air traffic to the west side of the airport and will work with airport user groups to develop noise abatement procedures.

During the scoping process, the public raised concern over “run-ups” by aircraft operating at HEA now and in the future. CCDOA will designate a location and aircraft orientation for engine maintenance run-ups at HEA. The location will be as far as possible from existing homes near the airport. Aircraft will be oriented in a manner so as to minimize directing engine noise toward residential neighborhoods. CCDOA will consider and review the effectiveness of acoustical barriers to further minimize the noise levels from run-ups.

To update the Airport EA’s noise analysis, a second aircraft noise study was conducted in November, 1999. The *Aircraft Noise Monitoring Study-Henderson Executive Airport, Clark County, NV, final version February 11, 2000* is incorporated by reference into this FONSI-Decision Record. The results of this study verifies the validity of the noise exposure analysis presented in the Airport EA. To ensure sustained compatibility with the surrounding area, CCDOA commits to periodic annual noise monitoring (not less than annually) and, if warranted, the development of a noise compatibility program conducted under FAR Part 150.

### Air Quality

Metropolitan Las Vegas is in non-attainment of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for suspended particulate matter (PM 10). As part of the Clean Air Act (CAA) requirement, Clark County Department of Comprehensive Planning is in the process of submitting a new State Implementation Plan (SIP) for PM 10 to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

The Final Report PM10 Emissions Inventory-McCarran International Airport, North Las Vegas Airport, Henderson Executive Airport, February 2000 (PM10 Emissions Report) was completed in support of the revised PM 10 SIP and is incorporated by reference into this FONSI-Decision Record.



Airport related PM 10 emissions are predominantly a result of on-road motor vehicle activity from entrained road dust. The PM10 Emissions Report presents data for levels of vehicle activity which are consistent with the findings in the Airport EA with the exception of “average daily air tour passengers”. The Airport EA reports 1,238 in 1996 and 2,445 in 2016 (pg. 110) while the PM 10 Emissions Report finds the average to be 274 in 1998 and 626 in 2015 (pg. 27). The difference results from the anticipated restriction placed on air tour operators by the FAA’s, Commercial Air Tour Limitation in the Grand Canyon National Park Special Flight Rules Area, Amendment 93-81. The Final Rule, issued March 27, 2000, limits the number of commercial air tours that may be conducted in the Grand Canyon National Park Special Flight Rules Area.

Emissions of PM 10 from aircraft are minimal (Airport EA, pg. 121). The PM 10 Emissions Report states PM 10 emissions from aircraft were 3.6 tons/year in 1998 and are predicted to be 7.2 tons/year in 2015 (pp. 28-33). These estimates are below the EPA’s established de minimus threshold of 70 tons/year.

With dust control measures in place, PM 10 from temporary construction activities are estimated at 28 tons over the two-year construction period and will not exceed the EPA’s de minimus threshold of 70 tons/year (Airport EA, pg. 123, BLM EA, pg. 23). Clark County is required to obtain a dust control permit for construction activities by the Clark County District Board of Health, the air quality monitoring and regulatory agency for EPA. PM10 emissions will be mitigated through the use of standard dust control techniques including sprinkling, compacting, enclosure, and chemical or asphalt sealing (Airport EA, pp. 116-128; BLM EA, pp. 22-23).

Clark County Department of Comprehensive Planning is also in the process of demonstrating attainment of the NAAQS for CO in the Las Vegas Valley. The Carbon Monoxide Emissions Inventory and Dispersion Modeling-McCarran International, North Las Vegas, and Henderson Executive Airports, July 1999 (CO Emissions Report) was completed to this end. The CO Emissions Report was submitted to BLM after completion of the BLM EA and is incorporated by reference into this FONSI/Decision Record.

Reported levels of CO associated with aircraft operations in the CO Emissions Report differ from levels reported in the Airport EA due to new information and modeling guidance that was not available at the time the Airport EA was prepared. A comparison of the aircraft operations and the general fleet mixes used for the emission estimates show that consistent assumptions were employed. Although the estimates differ, CO emissions for the project fall below the EPA’s de minimus threshold. Therefore, the finding in the Airport EA that the changes in CO emissions associated with the proposed action would be less than de minimus levels and that a conformity analysis would not be required remains valid.

Carbon monoxide (CO) emissions from mobile vehicles will not exceed the de minimus threshold of 100 tons/year (Airport EA, pg. 125). Oxides of nitrogen (NOx) from aircraft engines will not exceed the EPA’s de minimus threshold of 100 tons/year (Airport EA, pg. 121).

In a March 18, 1998 letter, the Clark County Health District certified that the proposed action will not

adversely affect the region's air quality (Airport EA, Appendix E).

### Socio-economics

CCDOA plans to implement various non-airfield improvements at the airport which are expected to result in additional aviation-related businesses. The expansion would generate jobs for local residents, support the Henderson business community, the Grand Canyon Air Tour industry, and benefit corporate and general aviation users (Airport EA, pp. 113-116; BLM EA, pg. 23).

### Threatened or Endangered Species

Impacts to the eastern Mojave sub-population of Desert Tortoise will be mitigated pursuant to the terms and conditions of the incidental take permit issued by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (PRT 7801045), pursuant to Section 10(a)(1)(b) of the Endangered Species Act and the Clark County Desert Conservation Plan. Clark County shall pay Desert Tortoise mitigation fees of \$603.00 per acre for all land which will be disturbed by construction activities (Airport EA, pp. 142-147; BLM EA, pp. 25-26).

### Mineral Resources

According to the *Las Vegas Valley Mineral Potential Report*, February 22, 1999, the federal land has low potential for the occurrence of volcanic rock or any other saleable minerals. There are three placer mining claims located in the NW¼ and SW¼ of Section 11 which are current for the 2000 assessment. The lease will be issued subject to these mining claims; NMC 680995, NMC 680996, and NMC 705885 (BLM EA, pg. 26).

### Water Resources

The proposed project will increase runoff from impervious surfaces which would be accommodated through drainage facilities incorporated into the airport stormwater system design. All drainage facilities will be designed to comply with FAA Advisory Circular criteria, local and regional drainage laws, flood control master plans, the Clark County Regional Flood Control District Hydrologic Criteria and Drainage Design Manual, and the Uniform Regulations for the Control of Drainage. The Pittman East Detention Basin, including collection dikes and outfall channel, will control stormwater which may affect the airport property (Airport EA, Figure 8). It is recommended that a berm be constructed to direct stormwater flows in the Eastern Wash away from Runway 17L-35R (Airport EA, pp. 131-135; BLM EA, pg. 24).

Project construction could cause sedimentation and erosion impacts mainly as a result of stormwater runoff. A National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit will be required to ensure purity of the water discharged from the construction site (Airport EA, pg. 166). As part of the permit application, a construction Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan will be prepared. Sedimentation and erosion control measures would be factored into the plan including the use of silt screens, diversion berms, or other best

management practices. With these facilities in place, no adverse effect on water quality would result from implementation of the project (Airport EA, pp. 129-135, pg. 166; BLM EA, pp. 27-28).

CCDOA currently has a Stormwater General Discharge Permit from the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Division of Environmental Protection for 359 facilities statewide including HEA (permit number GNV0022233-20447).

#### Other Waters of the United States

Portions of the eastern tributary of the Pittman Wash (approximately 3.984 acres) which runs along the east side of the airport boundary include a definite bed and bank and are classified under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act as “waters of the United States” and fall under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (COE). A permit would be required prior to filling any of these “waters” (Airport EA, pp. 148-149; BLM EA, pg. 28).

#### Cactus and Yucca

A plant survey has determined that cactus and yucca will be impacted by construction and must be salvaged. The plants can be used for landscaping the grounds of the airport. If the material is not utilized by CCDOA, then CCDOA shall coordinate a commercial sale of the plants with the BLM (BLM EA, Appendix E).

#### **Cumulative Impacts:**

In addition to the runway improvements, CCDOA plans to reconfigure the aircraft parking apron, construct additional aircraft storage and parking facilities, develop a new terminal and administration building, and improve airfield drainage and roadway access. Some of these improvements would be constructed at the same time as the runways thereby increasing construction impacts.

Construction mitigation measures include obtaining a dust control permit from the Health District, scheduling activities during off-peak periods, defining access routes for construction equipment, performing construction activities during daylight hours, identification of haul roads and landfill areas prior to excavation, and removal of any spillage materials from excavation at the end of each shift (Airport EA, pp. 165-167).

#### **Unavoidable Adverse Effects:**

Potential adverse effects include surface traffic congestion, construction dust, and noise generated by construction equipment (Airport EA, pg. 174). Mitigation measures recommended for surface traffic congestion include scheduling activities during off-peak traffic periods and defining access routes for use



by construction equipment on public streets. Mitigation measures recommended for noise impacts include performing construction during daytime hours. However, temporary noise impacts caused by construction cannot be fully mitigated (Airport EA, pg. 167).

### **Unaffected Resources:**

The airport is not situated in proximity to historic or cultural resources, Native American religious concerns, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, areas of critical environmental concern, wilderness areas, floodplains, and no threatened/endangered species of plants or noxious weeds are located on the federal land.

Implementation of the proposed project would not adversely impact the operation of Lake Mead Drive. No communities in the airport environs are classified as minority or low income as defined in Executive Order No. 12898, *Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Population*.

### **Hazardous Wastes:**

In 1996, Clark County purchased the Sky Harbor Airport entirely situated on private land. On February 3, 1994, the Sky Harbor Airport was listed on Nevada's list of "Hazardous Substances Spills-Releases" as having had soil contamination from polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), waste oil, and heavy metals. All known areas of contaminated soil have been remediated according to the Nevada Department of Environmental Protection (NDEP). However, due to historical use at the airport, it is possible that adverse conditions exist at the site which have not been identified. If during construction, unknown/potentially dangerous materials surface, construction excavation activity would cease until NDEP and BLM are notified. Any hazardous material discovered would be handled and disposed of using best known containment methods.

Five underground storage tanks (USTs) were present at HEA. CCDOA had them removed and has replaced them with above-ground storage tanks. All removal and construction activities were conducted in accordance with permits issued by the Health District (Airport EA, pp. 168-172; BLM EA, pg. 27).

On February 15, 1999, a Level I Contaminant Survey was conducted on the 140 acres of federal land and no evidence was found that any hazardous substances have been stored or released on the site in the past year (Airport EA, pp. 162-163, 168-172; BLM EA, pg. 27).

The HEA lease contains stipulations regarding the use, storage, or release of hazardous substances on federal land (Exhibit A).

## **FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI)**

This FONSI addresses the environmental analyses found in the Airport EA and the BLM EA. None of the impacts analyzed in these documents meet the criteria identified in 40 CFR 1508.27(a or b) for a determination of significance. Based on the analysis of potential environmental impacts, I have determined that the impacts associated with issuance of the Henderson Executive Airport Lease to CCDOA are not significant, therefore, an Environmental Impact Statement is not required.

## **DECISION**

It is my decision to authorize the airport lease. The action will enable the Henderson Executive Airport to fully serve in its intended role as an enhanced reliever to McCarran International Airport. The mitigation measures identified in the environmental assessments have been formulated into the attached stipulations (Exhibit A).

## **Rationale For Decision**

The proposed action will not result in any environmental degradation and is in conformance with the Las Vegas Resource Management Plan, Decision LD-2A, October 5, 1998. The Airport Lease is compatible with surrounding land uses and would accommodate community expansion consistent with the needs of the public.

Angie Lara (Acting)  
for Mark Morse  
Las Vegas Field Manager

June 22, 2000  
Date